

# San Diego County Board of Supervisors

## History

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## History of the Board of Supervisors

The County of San Diego was established on February 18, 1850—one of the original 27 counties established by the State Legislature shortly after California was admitted into the Union. A Court of Sessions was created to handle the administrative affairs of the new County government. At that time, San Diego County had a population of just 798 and covered nearly 40,000 square miles.

The Court of Sessions was replaced in 1852 by a five-member Board of Supervisors, which held its first meeting on January 3, 1853. Originally, Board membership was limited to a term of one year and Supervisors were elected at large. In 1855 the County was divided into three districts and then in 1869 the State Legislature created four districts with one Supervisor elected at large.

Although the format of Board membership went through many changes during the County's first 30 years, it has remained relatively constant since 1880, when terms were extended to four years. Five districts were formed under the Uniform County Government Act of 1883, with one Supervisor elected from each district.

## The Office

The office of County Supervisor is nonpartisan. Supervisors are nominated and elected from the district in which they live for a four-year term. District boundaries are based primarily on population, with each Supervisor representing about one-fifth of the County's almost 2.9 million residents.

Supervisors for Districts 1, 2, and 3 are elected during presidential election years; those for Districts 4 and 5 are elected in gubernatorial election years.

## Duties and Powers

The Board of Supervisors is both the legislative and executive arm of County government and also serves in a quasi-judicial capacity.

As a legislative body, the Board enacts ordinances and resolutions that can apply either to the County as a region (including cities within it) or specifically to the unincorporated area of the County.

As an executive body, the Board administers the activities of County agencies, departments and offices, except those headed by other elected County officials (Sheriff, District Attorney, Treasurer-Tax Collector and Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk).

In its quasi-judicial role, the Board reviews certain zoning, planning and land use matters and considers appeals in granting or denying permits or licenses.

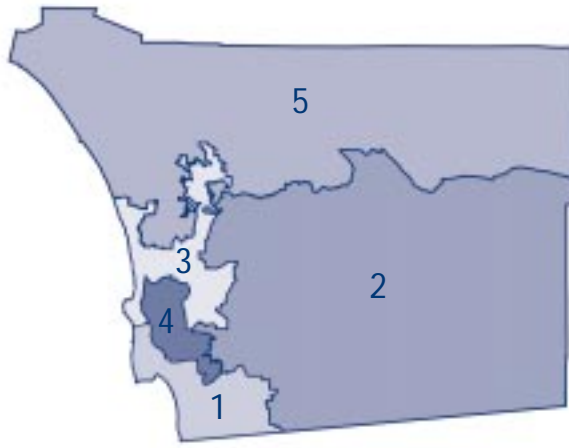
The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for carrying out much of the executive powers. The CAO is hired by and held accountable to the Board of Supervisors. The Clerk of the Board provides administrative support by preparing agendas and maintaining minutes of meetings and official Board records.

The Board adopts an annual budget for the County, establishes tax rates, and authorizes bond issues, subject to approval of voters. The Board is empowered to establish and control special districts to provide services in the unincorporated area.

Powers of the Board are derived from the State Constitution and County Charter, first adopted by voters in 1933.

In addition to their work as the governing body of San Diego County, members of the Board of Supervisors serve as the Air Pollution Control Board and the Board of Commissioners for the County of San Diego Housing Commission. The Board also serves as the Board of Directors for the Redevelopment Agency of the County of San Diego, the County of San Diego Industrial Development Authority, the San Diego County Flood Control district and five sanitation districts.

## Supervisory Districts



## County Government

The County of San Diego is the regional government authority responsible for the health, protection and welfare of close to 2.9 million area residents. County government also provides municipal, or city-type services, for the more than 447,000 people who live in unincorporated areas.

Among a host of services, the County is responsible for: administering elections, fighting crime, keeping the air we breathe clean, inspecting restaurant kitchens, managing eight regional airports, leading welfare-to-work efforts, recovering stray animals, maintaining and building parks, running libraries, preparing for natural disasters, cleaning up hazardous spills, maintaining public health and protecting children from abuse and neglect.

The County derives its authority from California's state constitution. Included is the power to act to preserve the public health, safety and welfare, and to assess, levy and collect taxes. San Diego is one of only 13 counties statewide to have adopted a charter.

## Public Meetings of the Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors conducts meetings most Tuesdays and Wednesdays, beginning at 9 a.m. Tuesday meetings generally address regular budget matters, policy issues and intergovernmental and legislative matters. Wednesday meetings generally are devoted to planning and land use matters.

All meetings, except closed sessions, are open to the public. Under state law, the Board of Supervisors may meet in closed session to discuss subjects such as personnel matters and litigation.

Agendas are available in advance from the Clerk of the Board on the County's website at [www.co.san-diego.ca.us](http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us). Statements of proceedings and public access to official actions taken by the Board of Supervisor are also available on this site.

Meetings are broadcast live on CTN (the County Television Network) and over the Internet at [www.ctn.org](http://www.ctn.org). CTN can be seen on: Cox 19 (north) and 24 (south), Time Warner 22, and Adelphia 66. Times and dates of meeting rebroadcasts are posted on the CTN schedule at [www.ctn.org](http://www.ctn.org).

## Meeting Procedures

At the beginning of each meeting, the Board "pulls" items appearing on the agenda that the public or the Board wishes to discuss. The remaining items on the agenda, having no apparent opposition, form the "consent calendar" and are voted upon with a single Board action.

Items pulled for discussion are heard in the order they appear on the agenda. Items pulled by the public are set first, followed by those pulled by members of the Board. Public testimony favoring an item is usually heard before opposition testimony. Each item is voted upon at the conclusion of the discussion. Board members vote electronically, with the results displayed on the wall of the Chamber.

## Addressing the Board

Members of the public wishing to address the Board at a meeting should submit a "Request to Speak" form to the Clerk of the Board. The public can either address the Board in response to a pulled agenda item or during the 10 minutes set aside at the beginning of each meeting for public comment.

Public comment requests (to speak on an issue not on the agenda) must be filed at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting. Speakers are given two minutes each to address the Board. Ten minutes is allocated at the beginning of the meeting. Any remaining speakers are heard at the end of the meeting.

To address the Board regarding an agenda item, a person must submit a speaker's form at least five minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Separate slips are available for support or opposition to the stated recommendation. Speakers are not allowed to yield their time to another person.

The Board Chairperson sets the length of time for presentations by individuals, which is generally a maximum of three minutes. An organized group presentation may be allotted up to 15 minutes. Written statements submitted to the Clerk of the Board can either support, oppose or serve in lieu of oral testimony comments.

## For Further Information

Public meetings of the Board of Supervisors are held at the downtown County Administration Center, 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 310. Information on agenda items or presentations before the Board are available at:

**Clerk of the Board, Room 402  
County Administration Center**

**(619) 531-5600**

**[www.co.san-diego.ca.us](http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us)**